12/23/72

Dear Jim,,

I have not read the VN stories in this a.m.'s Post, except for the lead one. I've read Ken Crawford's intellectual vomit, the Marder column, and that is all. There was no need to read any of it. Save for the details, you and I saw all. On my own part, I did under-estimate the irrationality and bestiality of which Nixon and the military are capable and the number of like (sick)minded they could gather or convert. We understood, as only the stupid or unthink should have, that Nixon set out immediately to make any kind of aneasy exit impossible and to give his mendicants control, all without need or benefit.

There is a strange appropriateness in Crawford's self-debasement. He typifies a major cause of all of this, the failure of the press and more, of those able to offer opinions.

(I knew him years ago, pretty well, in the late 30s. I saw him the last time when Newsweek was about to publish its long piece on Lane, I guess toward the end of 1966. When his Pressure Boys appeared he asked a favor of me, something that was impossible, and I think he never forgave me for failing to do the impossible. What he had made impossible, defending a libel suit against him by a genuine fascist Congressman, Thorkelson. It was impossible to defame that wretched beast from Montana. So, Crawford, in the manner of the pink-tea liberals of those days, invented an unnecessary ground for a libel action. Thorkelson was a doctor. Ken said he was the graduate of a diploma-mill. It had a strange name, something like The Cincinnati Ecclectic Institute, but it was accredited somewhere or somehow. I was free-lancing then, so, naturally, since whatever work I did did not come out of a paycheck, Ken didn't offer to pay -and didn't. Principle to defend him against his carelessness, but not principle to pay for it.)

His Clausewitz figure interests me because I have been using it accurately for years, going back to before I heard Jim Eason's cute name for what we were doing, Escalatio. I put it more simply, saying that LBJ was engaging in reverse Calusewitz. But how anyone can't see that only the opposite of what he says can be true escapes me. I guess all these whores are hungup on their own spiled and stained linens and are driven to interpreting the stains on their honor as a pattern in the weaving. They must have a subconscious or an unconscious understand ng of their own responsibility.

It is not possible to live in a sick society and be immune to its contamination. So, to say that people are sick is not necessarily to condemn them. Not, at least, on that basis. You will remember, I think, not infrequent references I made to belief that Nixon is mentally ill, most recently at the time of the Eagleton fiasco. I think you have offered the same or similar opinion. That, of course, is bad enough. But the evidence continues to accumulate that he can abide around him only those as ill or as susceptible, the only conspicuous exception being the prerequisite of crookedness. Ash and Clemente are only two of the newer examples. "one of those close to him can be considered rational. One of the more recent examples is the enclosed story quoting Father Hesburgh and his own futilities, the man of principled silence.. Unless one considers the Goebbels strain in Germany rational, one can't consider the Zieglers, Kleins and Friedheims mere liars. By the way, of the few recent useful services of TV news was to do what today's Post fails to, give his words and face while he was being questioned by the press yesterday. I hope it was repeated on radio, where it would have been a remarkable exposition, albeit without the astounding face and visible manner. In his department we are at the point of the German equivalent, as we lon have been in the military announcements, too. I have not had time to read most of this stuff, but I've heard a fair amount, enough in their own voices. It reminds me of OSS days, where for our shop Groff Conklin (later at American Heritage and much changed) and I posted the battle-lines on a plastic-sheeted Army Millionth map of Europe. Different colors for the announcements and communiques of the various countries. We did this first thing each morning, based on the NYTimes texts of the communiques.

What we are doing dignifies Lidice, yet there is relative tranquitity. From the Hesburghs it is not gracious to say what must be said, and there is notning but saying. I have seen no single account of the impossibility of using B52 as they are except for pure terror and slaughter, of the certainty of the result, for example. No single questioning of the depravity of the claim that if we hit our own POWs that is Hanoi's fault! Not recently if ever have I seen any statement that the Geneva convention applies to declared wars only (which is quite separate from faithful recitation of its provisions), and we have refused to declare war, thus deny ourselves its benefits. Or that if it did apply, it applies to almost all our abuses, from tortures to bombing and strafing cities and civilians in the countryside, to the napalming, to the throwing from helicopters, to the kinds of new bullets

we have invented and made standard to accomplish all the illicit purposes of the dumdum with the pretended sanction of the convention.

So, the traditional protection no longer exists. For all its sanctimony, and particularly because of the fact and the nature of the attack on it, how can one justify the Post's not printing the q and a of Friendheim's yesterday's press conference, if that is what it ever is? No need to explain or editorialize.

Dudman made an interesting point in one of the NPR series on VN. He said, as we all know, that as a people we have lost our capacity for indignation, ~~while~~ blaming it on VN. He said it is the secret shame of each that made so many regard McGovern as the enemy because he made each face his personal guilt. Or, this guilt feeling is what defeated McG. Too simple, but much truth. Aside from whatever opinion one holds on when and where this began, and you know mine, to the degree one can pinpoint it, the papers knew what they refused to say. I remember Steve Barber's indignation years ago (about 1966) when he told me of the pot more than the horse that replaced hooch with our troops in VN, of specific incidents in false body counts and how they were contrived, or of orders given to pilots who had seen nobody and certainly slain none to increase that day's count from 20 to 28, something like that. This particular case got to Steve from an association on the London Telegraph, as I recall a woman reporter who'd spent the entire day with that pilot from emplaning on. Maybe she wrote the story for the Telegraphn and maybe the Telegraph printed it, but the Post didn't, and it had its own people there, one of whom is also in this NPR series, Don Oberdorfer, radioed from Tokyo. And the Times did, ~~xxxxx~~ shades of Halberstam; and the AP did, many shades; and CBS did-remember what happened to Morley Safer when all he did was report and film the wanton burning of an unfortified village in which there were no soldiers or guerrillas?

So with the guilt press whose profits come, like all do today, from war policy, and madmen running the country, what can happen? The nature of the control of the military is clear enough; and their devotion to their boy Nixon is predictable enough, so is there no any way of preventing what he is up to?

Especially is he and his are sick and see their evil as good or their wrong as right and necessary? All the doctors Strangeloves, all the days the Seven of May!

If it could be hoped that serious international pressure would mount - and the little has been little reported, the Pope's newest downplayed in today's Post - can it then be hoped that it could influence these dedicated wrong, these Nixonian authoritarians?

It is possible to see other and unreported hazards in all of this. The military admits it expected the loss of 40 men the first week of B52ing. It admits losing more, and there is little doubt the losses are still greater. However, the fact is that many, most by far, got through and came out. Or, encouragement to the Strangeloves: the B52s can get through with their nukes. If we see stories of how well they are frustrating the newest in Soviet SAMs, the worry on this score is greater. Remember, these are lower-level flights than those of which the plane is capable, too.

Too bad the kids were violent at the wrong time. Now is the time, but they have made its time the time of the past. Unless they now are as cunning as the Weatherpeople and as numerous as the Boy Scouts. And as righless as Nixon. This is a society that reacts to money, violence costs money as well as lives. There is little concern for the lives but much for the money.

The extreme to which we have so silently progressed is illuminated by the firing of Helms. The word is because he insisted in giving The Boss what Helms regarded as honest intelligence assessments, and The Boss wants only those that prove him and his right. Exactly what I saw in the captured German and Italian files that passed through my hands.

A reminiscence: The Army, when it could not get out of what had been agreed would be Russian territory, burned what it could not take rather than let the Russians have anything it couldlater use against Nazis, a monopoly we wanted to enjoy (i.e. the ~~xxxxx~~ Werner von Brauns and the Adenauers) They tried hard but could not destroy everything, and what was in our territory if did not, of course, destroy. These files it lied about. I don't recall the need, but I recall at least two incidents where I was consulted by the man then in a role roughly that later filled by Roger Hillsman. He had heard of and wanted parts of some of these files. The Army insisted they did not exist. I was able to tell him near what city or town, in what mine, they were. He then had the problem of getting the Army to cough up. So this is not a new policy Nixon fronts. Even with Mussolini they did the same. A French economist in a different agency and I independently traced about 25

reels not rolls of microfilm of documents the partisans got when they captured Musso. We put them on a plane going to the Pentagon in Europe in our tracing and I'm pretty sure into the Pentagon. They've never been heard of since, to the best of my knowledge. But immediately there was an incredible US penetration of Italian industry. I worked on part of that, too, so I have some first-hand knowledge. I seem to recall that Pirelli was one of the first victims and the liberal Henry Kaiser one of the early ebenficiaries. Aldo GE, I think. But mone of them lost time and all were heavily engaged in producing for the military and most likely to be those the military wanted to help and to whom the military of higher rank retire.

I am not without hope that somehow we will yet avoid what seems to impend at home. But I can't find a single legitimate basis for any such hope.

If Khruschev's figure of the single madman was apt, what when there are none not madmen? And when all the shrinks are Ken Crawfords?

Having seen it all so clearly and so long ago and having put the essence of it on paper from the time of the JFK assassination on and spelled large parts out in books, beginning in 5/67 and more in COUP, the p rt edited out in printing need, as soon as King was killed, I am not depressed by my beiefs for I am not surprised by anything that has happened. Only the details stun, like so many pilots willing to kill those they can't possibly tell themslevs are other than innocents, hold any surprise. We did not need The Pentagon Papers to know, and they gave me only detail I didn't need and misinformation (example, what they could not say about the CIA). With only what was published as widely as anything could be, even the details of the Tonkin Gulf device were clear enough and my notes on them, made at the time, are still accurate, with nothing essential to a proper analysis since made public-only added proof and guilty knowledge more widespread. As I have said so often in the JFK work, this is not to say that I am inordinately sharp. But it is to say that others just refused to see what was glaring.

Aside from the greater power of the criminally insane, a power greater than any dedicated to evil and considering it right have ever held, this remains, I think, the most serious danger. When today even the author of Marder's attached column has to hedge, there is little ground for serious hope.

Yet I do hope, and I do long to free myself from what is for us essential so I can return to what may be only the making of that part of the record that is within my capability and trying to find some way for paying for the xeroxing so I can register it in the Copyright Office so that copies may be on deposit for the future.

Long ago I had to discontinue trying to keep up woth SEAsia. Howard has boxes of those files. If any of the things I send you are not of interest, if you can find space for a box and just accumulate them for him, I am sure he would welcome it. He has no immediate need, in fact, probably would not have the time to even read before summer at the earliest. I can tell from the scarcity of communication that he must be very busy in college. I still expect him some time over the holidays and will ask him. He has an added use: he is a history major. I hope, as does his father, that he will continue and get a law degree. Particularly because there are four more years in which the swamps will yield more Carswells and Rehnquists and Burgers.

Let me close what I hope does not depress you with another exmple from the past of what I do not intend to be more depressing. I knew Jimmy Wechsler shortly after he quit the Communist Party. He then had made a stoolpidgeon of Merwin K. Hart's secretary. Hart ran a fascist business outfit called The New York State Economic counsel and had extensive business-interest backing. He was also a Franco agent. The late Pat Jackson and I, more I, had a vigorous disagrement with Jimmy because he insisted on just sitting on all the files this woman stole for him. All we could every persuade him to do was to meet with O. John Rogge (of whose later career some questions linger in a cloud in my mind), then chief of DJ Criminal Division. This is typical of the histories of the renegade reds and the "liberals". They all had navels whose sole utility was to provide a point for contemplation that was never more than the avpidance of facing anything. Naturally, since then Jimmy has never had any sue for me and never returned any calls I amde to him when I was in NY and he was editing the Post. All have different designations, but this is another sample of what galls all these people, like Crawford today, guilt. (Pat and I, as I recall, wanted to use some of that material in our fight against Dies and his upcoming appropriation.)

Sorry about this sticking ribbon. I guess I'll have to replace it so I can see.

Keep the faith, friends!